

WHILE YOU'RE UNDERWAY — A SAMPLE RIVER

How to Run the River

Always travel with an experienced trip leader who is familiar with the waterway. **Never boat alone.** A three boat standard is used for a white-water run. Keep both preceding and following boats in sight, never get ahead of the lead craft, and never lag behind the sweep/drag (last) craft. Safely navigating a waterway requires more than the ability to handle your craft. It also requires the ability to *read* a river, to know when to *scout*, and when to *portage*. Watch out for these hazards to avoid.

Key

Scout
Portage - - - - -

C. Get Out and Scout

When approaching obstructions like rocks or sharp bends in the river plan your approach in advance. Paddle to shore, get out and scout. Examine obstructions. Portage if necessary.

D. Portage

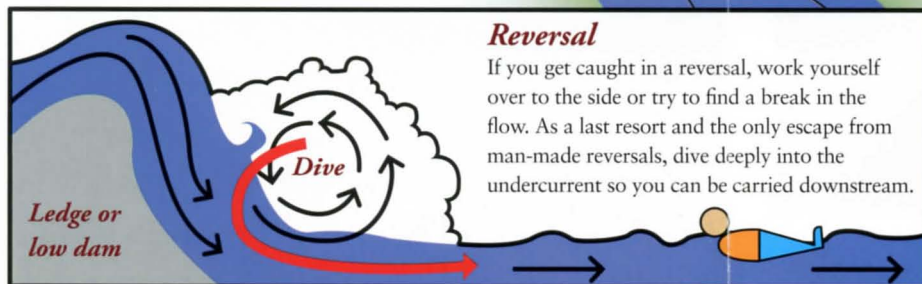
Carry your craft over and around obstacles or rapids you are unsure of. If portage is difficult and water is passable, "line" your craft (tow it from shore).

F. Reversals/Hydraulics

Also known as holes and "keeper" holes, these are especially hard to escape around man-made dams. When water falls over an obstacle, it curls back on itself. This forms a strong upstream current which may hold a boat or swimmer. (See Below)

H. Log Jams

Stay away from them. They can damage or upset your boat if you paddle too closely and can sweep paddles or paddlers under the jam.



Reversal

If you get caught in a reversal, work yourself over to the side or try to find a break in the flow. As a last resort and the only escape from man-made reversals, dive deeply into the undercurrent so you can be carried downstream.

A. Put-In and Take Out

Just before getting underway examine the put-in point. Observe how the take-out point looks from the river before landing.

B. Need to Read

Paddlers need to know how to read a river to maneuver their craft through the safest course. Example: Upstream V's indicate objects or obstacles in the water "danger." Downstream V's indicate a path through the objects.

E 1. Watch Horizon Lines

A river's horizon line, where the river's flow drops from sight, can tell you what's ahead. If you see large rocks and white caps, you may be approaching a rapid. If the horizon line disappears, look out! You may be headed for a drop. Get out and scout.

E 2. Waterfalls, Drops and Dams

Avoid waterfalls, drops and all dams; they may form reversals. Scout and/or portage if necessary.

G. Strainers

Strainers are formed by trees, branches, logs or debris lying across or just under the water's surface. Avoid them as they allow water to flow through, but can catch and entrap paddles and paddlers underwater or entangle lines on boats.

Note: The representation diagram depicts some common hazards you may encounter on a river. Remember, the best put-in and take-out points for scouting and portage depend on individual river characteristics.